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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Memorandum

January 21, 2010

To: National Leadership Council

From: Deputy Director, Operations
/s/ Daniel N. Wenk

Subject: Implementation of Section 512 of Public Law 111-24, Firearms in National Parks

On February 22, 2010, federal law that governs the possession of firearms in national parks will significantly change.

The change will affect virtually every park and require every region and every park to take proactive measures to ensure the smooth implementation of the law. This memo expands upon information already shared with regional and park chief rangers, contains links to legal background and other useful tools, and establishes new requirements to ensure consistent implementation of the law across the National Park Service. I will summarize the most important points, but it is imperative that you read and fully understand this entire package.

What does the new law do?

At its most basic, the new law generally allows anyone who can legally possess a firearm under federal and state laws outside of a national park to possess that firearm in the park under the same terms.

It is the responsibility of every superintendent to fully understand the applicable firearms laws of the state – or states – in which your park is located, including any applicable local laws. I know that this effort has been underway since the law was signed last May, and appreciate your diligence.

It is the responsibility of each regional director to ensure that National Park Service interpretation of state law is consistent across every park in that state.

To ensure consistency in our interpretation of similar laws across multiple states, each region must submit its state-by-state guidance to Rick Obernesser, Acting Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, as soon as possible, but **no later than February 15**. All guidance will be posted on a comprehensive new InsideNPS page: [Firearms Law Implementation & Information](#).

What doesn't change?

Enforcement in instances of illegal possession of firearms

Enforcement of federal law on the prohibition of the use of firearms in national parks
Enforcement of federal law prohibiting possession of certain types of firearms by certain categories of people
Enforcement of federal law that prohibits the possession of firearms in “federal facilities”
Applicability of Department of the Interior/National Park Service rules and policies prohibiting employees – including volunteers – from possessing firearms while on duty (other than law enforcement employees and others authorized to carry firearms as part of their job)

Next Steps

The complexity of implementing this new firearms law cannot be overstated. Nor can the importance of getting it right, everywhere.

Our objective is that:

- every employee has a working knowledge of the changes, is able to answer basic questions from visitors, and knows to whom to refer visitors for more in-depth information
- we discuss the change with partners who work with us in the parks: volunteers, concessioners, cooperating associations, and others, so any effect on their activities is understood and addressed
- visitors who wish to bring firearms to a park recognize that it is their responsibility to understand and comply with state and federal law
- [park websites](#) are updated **no later than February 5** to reflect the new law
- [signs are posted](#) **no later than February 21** at public entrances of “federal facilities” noting the prohibition on firearms inside
- signs that indicate a prohibition on firearms are removed if appropriate, **no later than February 21**
- other park materials (newspapers, exhibits, etc.) are updated as soon as possible

Questions should be addressed to regional chief rangers or to Phil Selleck, Chief, Regulations and Special Park Uses, philip_selleck@nps.gov (202) 208-4206, or Lane Baker, Chief, Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services, (202) 513-7084, or emailed to nps_firearmsquestions@nps.gov. Questions and answers that have an impact beyond a single park or require consistent interpretation across parks will be regularly posted on InsideNPS at [Firearms Law Implementation & Information](#).

Your continued hard work and commitment to implementing the new firearms law is appreciated. Please forward this information with your regional chief rangers and park superintendents immediately.

The following additional information is available on InsideNPS at [Firearms Law Implementation & Information](#):

Guidance, Firearms Legislation Implementation for P.L. 111-24 Section 512
Text of Section 512, P.L. 111-24
Questions & Answers
Identifying “federal facilities”
Federal Facility “Firearms Prohibited” Sign Graphic
Firearms Information to Add to Park Websites
Federal Prohibitors
Contact Information, Offices of State Attorneys General